

VISIT...

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AUTHORITY

11

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UK 40p

GIANT-SIZED ANNUAL THE UNCANNY

X-MEN



ALAN BISHOP



PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS-- SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK...

"OH-HHHHHHHHHH..."

"...there's no place on Earth like the wurrrrid-- kee"

"...there's nowhere that I'd rather be..."

"...there's no place on Earth like the world--
LRRP--"

"...so sit up an' take it from me..."

STAN LEE
PRESENTS

Lost in the FUNHOUSE

STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
AND CAPTAIN BRITAIN

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TEA WILL BE BREWED IN A MINUTE, YOU TWO, CAKES ARE ON THE TABLE.

HOW'D YOU KNOW I WAS HUNGRY, BETSY? READ MY MIND?

NO NEED, SISTERS CAN TELL THESE THINGS.

Oh, WONDERFUL-- A TELEVISION! MIND IF I WATCH?

THAT WAY I WON'T DISTURB BRIAN AND BETSY'S CHAT.

GO RIGHT AHEAD, MEGGAN.

IT'S GOOD SEEING YOU AGAIN, BRIAN.

I'M SORRY WOLVERINE SPOILED YOUR FIRST NIGHT HERE.

WILL HE BE ALL RIGHT?

STORM KNOWS HIM, SHE LEADS THE X-MEN-- I TRUST HER JUDGMENT.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR OWN? HAVE YOU FOUND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR-- HERE AT XAVIER'S SCHOOL, AS A MEMBER OF THE X-MEN?

I THOUGHT I'D BE SAFE, THAT XAVIER'S WOULD BE A SORT OF HAVEN WHERE I'D REGAIN MY STRENGTH AND SELF-RELIANCE-- SO I COULD GET ON WITH THE REST OF MY LIFE.

BUT I WAS WRONG. NOWHERE IS SAFE, AND NO ONE.

WILL THE NIGHTMARE EVER END, BRIAN? ARE WE MUTANTS FOREVER MARKED BY OUR PARA-HUMAN ABILITIES. LIKE CAIN-- YOU ALWAYS BE HATED AND HUNTED, AND TOO OFTEN SLAUGHTERED??

STOP IT, BETSY! I WON'T ACCEPT SUCH TALK.

I CAN'T BE AFRAID?

YOU CAN'T LET IT DESTROY YOU.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, I'VE SEEN YOU TAKE BLOWS THAT WOULD SMASH THE STRONGEST SPIRIT AND NOT ONLY SURVIVE, BUT TRIUMPH.

I CAN ENDURE. BUT AS AN X-MAN, BRIAN, I HAVE TO FIGHT. THIS IS A BAND OF WARRIORS! AND I WONDER-- DO I TRULY BELONG AND, IF SO, WHY?

YOU SEE, SOME OF THE TEAM-- LIKE HAVOK-- CHOOSE THE "GLORY ROAD" OUT OF DUTY.

SOME, LIKE POOR DAZLER, BECAUSE FATE GIVES THEM NO REAL CHOICE.

BUT OTHERS SEEM ACTUALLY TO BE BORN TO IT.

WOLVERINE IS ONE, STORM ANOTHER.

I MUST KNOW, BRIAN-- WHICH AM I?

UPSTAIRS AND
SIDWAYS FROM
THE KITCHEN--

--IN THE X-MEN'S RESIDENTIAL
WING OF THIS STATELY,
VENERABLE HUDSON VALLEY
MANSION--

--IS WOLVERINE'S ROOM--

--WHOSE
FURNISHINGS ARE
AS ECLECTIC AND
DICHOTOMOUS
A MIX--

...AS IS THE MAN
HIMSELF.

SOME
RIGHTEOUS
BINGE...
...EVEN BY MY
STANDARDS.

AIN'T DULLED THE PAIN A BIT.

< I SHOULD
BE ASHAMED,
MARIKO-CHAN... >

< ...FOR THE
WAY I CHOSE
TO "HONOR"... >

< ...THE
ANNIVERSARY
OF OUR
WEDDING... >

< ...THAT
NEVER
WAS... >

< YOU
CALLED IT
OFF, SENT
ME AWAY,
TOLD ME
NOT TO
RETURN... >

*TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE-- A.

< ...UNTIL YOU HAD PROVED
YOURSELF WORTHY OF ME,
AS I HAD OF YOU. >

< I SHOULD BE SAMURAI.
I SHOULD BE STRONG. >

< BUT I LOVE YOU,
MIKO. HOW CAN
ANY WARRIOR
SURVIVE WHEN
HE'S CUT OUT
HIS HEART?! >

< (AND YET--HOW CAN
NOT, IN HONOR,
RESPECT YOUR WISHES?) >

WOLVERINE WOULDN'T. HE'D
TAKE WHAT HE WANTED,
THE DEVIL WITH RULES, MORALITY,
HONOR.

BUT I'M
LOGAN,
TOO.

AND IT OR
NOT...

LOGAN'S
A MAN.

SOMETIMES THOUGH--
IT HURTS SO BAD MISSING
YOU. THE WARRIOR'S
WAY SEEMS SO HARD--

--FORGIVE ME,
MARIKO. I FEEL
AS THOUGH I'D
GIVE MY SOUL
FOR THINGS TO
BE DIFFERENT.



A FLOOR ABOVE...

IN STORM'S
TITIC LOFT...



ALL. MY LOVE LIES--
LIFE FOR
YOU IS SO UN-
COMPLICATED.

WOULD
IT WERE THE
SAME FOR US.



A PITY THE
BEAUTY AND
FRAGRANCE
OF YOUR
BLOSSOMS...

...CANNOT
BRING
WOLVERINE
THE SAME
SERENITY...



THEY ALWAYS
DO ME--

INTRUDER!
THREAT!



SHE MOVES
WITH THE
SPEED AND
FLUID
GRACE OF A
JUNGLE CAT--

OW!

...FOR ALL THE GOOD
THAT DOES HER.

ORORO! STORM--
UPSTAIRS--
UNDER ATTACK!
ACTION
STATIONS,
MEGGAN!

LET'S MAKE
OURSELVES
USEFUL!



PSYLOCKE'S ALARM IS REPEATED--
INSTANTLY TELEPATHICALLY-- TO
EVERY X-MAN--

...BRINGING
ROGUE
FULL-TILT
FROM THE
MANSSION'S
HANGAR
COMPLEX.



AH GET THE PICTURE,
BETTS, THANKS.

AH'M SUPER-
STRONG ENOUGH
TO HANDLE
PRETTY MUCH
ANY OPPOSITION
ON MY OWN.



WITH CAP'N
BRITAIN
AN' HIS LADY
TO BACK
ME UP--

CLOBBERIN'
THIS CREEP...

...SHOULD
BE
CINCH!



OF COURSE. I
ALWAYS DO.

I
ALWAYS
WILL.

I CONFESS, GIRL,
FROM THE X-MEN'S
HIGHLY SOUGHT
REPUTATION, I
EXPECTED BETTER--

--BUT, IN TRUTH,
HAD YOU FOUGHT
TO THE FULLEST EXTENT
OF YOUR NO DOUBT
FORMIDABLE CAPABILITIES,
IT WOULD HAVE
MADE NO
DIFFERENCE.

FORGIVE ME.
I FORGET MY
MANNERS.
HOW RUDE AND
UNGENTLE-
MANLY.

I AM
HORDE!

IF YOU WILL
BE SO KIND AS
TO JOIN YOUR
COMPANIONS,
WE'LL BE ON OUR
MERRY WAY.

AND WITH
A WAVE OF
HIS HAND...





...THEY ARE. WE ARE MUCH ALIKE, YOU KNOW. FOR I, TOO, AM A MUTANT...

GIFTED WITH EXTRAORDINARY POWERS...

...THAT SET ME FOREVER APART FROM THE REST OF MY RACE.



HOWEVER, UNLIKE YOU SILLY SODS, I CHOOSE TO USE MINE, NOT TO PROTECT THE WEAK AND HELPLESS--NOT FOR THE BETTERMENT OF HUMANITY--

--BUT TO RULE!

YOU FIGURE ON RULIN' US, BUB?



DEAR ME, NO, THAT IS ALREADY AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT!

COME TO ME, STORM, MY PROUD BEAUTY. MAKE PROPER OBESANCE TO YOUR NEW MASTER.



HOW FIERCELY SHE GLARES-- IF LOOKS COULD KILL, eh?

YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN DEFY ME?

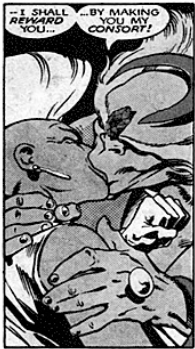
EVIDENTLY, OUR INITIAL ENCOUNTER WAS AN INSUFFICIENT DEMONSTRATION OF MY POWER.



BEHOLD THEN, HOW EASILY I CLOTHE YOU IN YOUR FIGHTING GARB, HEALING ALL BUMPS AND BRUISES, RESTORING YOU TO PERFECT HEALTH AND PEAK CONDITION.

AS FOR YOU, STORM, PERHAPS WHEN YOU COMPLETE YOUR GREAT TASK--

--ASSUMING, OF COURSE, YOU PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY--



--I SHALL REWARD YOU...

...BY MAKING YOU MY CONSORT!





THE OTHERS
FOLLOW HER
LEAD...



--REACTING WITHOUT
CONSCIOUS THOUGHT,
RESPONDING TO
HORDE...



--WITH AN INSTINCTIVE,
IRRESISTIBLE, SOUL-
DEEP REVULSION...



...THAT WILL NOT LET THEM REST UNTIL
THEIR FOE IS COMPLETELY OBLITERATED.

ONLY STORM--
STRANGELY--
HOLDS BACK.

WATCHING HER FRIENDS-- IN THE GRIP
OF THIS TERRIBLE, MANIC, BERSERKER
FURY-- WITH A COOL, ASSESSING GAZE.

THINKING THAT THIS IS
TOO PAT, TOO EASY, THERE
HAS TO BE A CATCH.



THERE
IS.

Oh!

AS I
SUSPECTED.

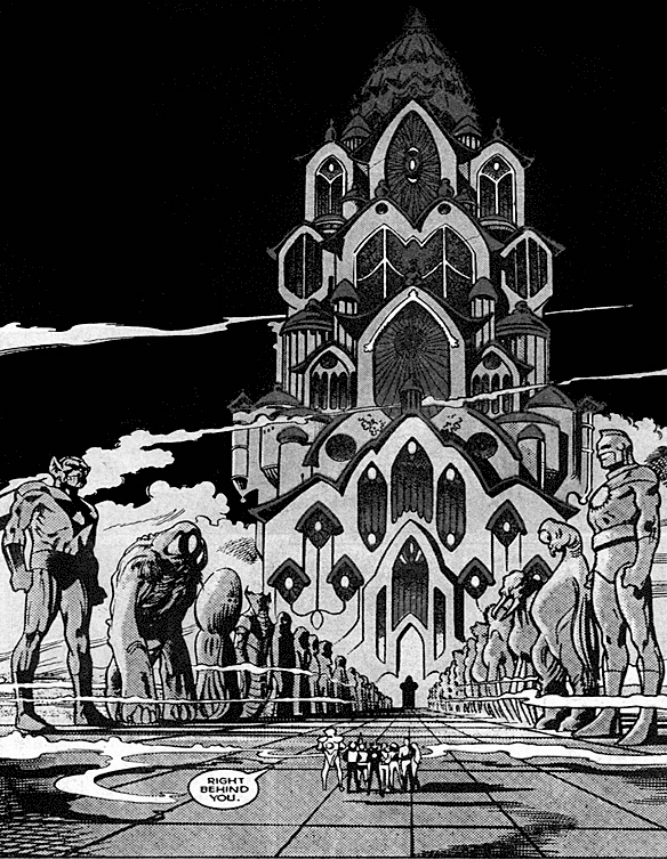
I DON'T
BELIEVE
IT!

WE HIT HIM WITH
EVERYTHING WE
HAD!

THIS
ISN'T
FAIR!

AND A
MIGHTILY
IMPRESSIVE
DISPLAY IT
WAS, TOO.





RIGHT
BEHIND
YOU.





WONDER WHAT THESE STATUES MEAN?

I RECOGNIZE THE TWO AT THE END--

WHO ARE THEY HAVOK?

GREEN GUYS A SKRULL, CAPTAIN.



THE OTHER'S A KREE. REAL NASTY PAIR OF RACES.

I SENSE NO PSI-SHIELDS ANYWHERE IN THIS CITADEL.

AND NO OTHER PRESENCES. WE ARE ALONE HERE.

I CONFIRM THAT. I SPOT NO LIVING SCENTS.

LOTS A DEADERS, THOUGH.



LONGSHOT, WHY ARE YOU HANGING BACK?

I DON'T KNOW, ALISON.



MY LEGS DON'T WANT TO WALK.

MY HEARTS DON'T WANT TO MAKE THEM.



HEY, PAL-O-MINE, WE'RE ALL SCARED! COMES WITH THE TERRITORY WHEN YOU'RE A SUPER HERO.

DON'T WORRY, I'LL STAND BY YOU, NO MATTER WHAT. PARTNERS TO THE END.

PLEASE, LONGSHOT-- DON'T STAY BEHIND.



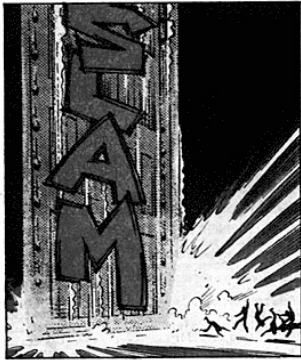
WE'RE X-MEN, WE'RE A TEAM, WE NEED YOU.

I NEED YOU.

OHAY.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT--

HAH???



SOMEONE
MAY HAVE SHUT
US IN...

BUT THEY
CERTAINLY
WOON'T KEEP
US HERE!

SKRAM

SO MUCH
FOR BRUTE
FORCE.

MAYBE I
CAN BURN
THROUGH?

FASCINATING, HAVOK'S
PROJECTING FOCUSED,
HIGH-INTENSITY
PLASMA.

AS A PHYSICIST, I'D LOVE TO EXPLORE
HOW HIS BODY METABOLIZES AND
MANIPULATES SUCH ENERGIES.

NOT
EVEN
WARM.

LIKE KRELL METAL,
IN THE MOVIE,
"FORBIDDEN
PLANET."

SORRY, FOLKS.
I'M AFRAID
WE'RE STUCK.

BIG FLAMIN'
SURPRISE.

WHERE
DO WE GO
FROM
HERE?

FOLLOW
MY ROAD,
DARLIN'...

...AN'
I'LL
SHOW
YOU.

PSYLOCKE, ESTABLISH A MIND-
LINK BETWEEN US, SO WE
CAN KEEP IN TOUCH.

DONE, WOLVERINE.

STORM,
AFTER THE
MESS WOLFE
MADE AT THE MANSION...

FLAWED OR NOT, ROGUE, WE
HAVE NONE TO DEPEND ON
BUT OURSELVES.

WE MUST
MAKE THE BEST
OF THAT.

WISH AH
HAD YOUR
FAITH--

--WHAT THE
HECK?!

...YOU SURE HE'S
THE RIGHT ONE TO
ACT AS SCOUT?







STORM--
WILL
THAT
HAPPEN
TO US
ALL?

A BRILLIANT DEFENSE,
TO OFFER NO
MORE THAN
WHAT A
PERSON
WANTS.

WHO CAN
RESIST SUCH
TEMPTATION?

SMALL WONDER
HORDE SENDS
OTHERS IN
HIS PLACE.



YOU'RE
IN CHARGE,
STORM.
WHAT'S OUR
NEXT
MOVE?

WHAT ELSE,
CAPTAIN?
WE
PRESS
ON.

WELL--
AT LEAST
THERE'S NO
NEED TO GO
STUMBLING
ABOUT IN
THE DARK...



SO LONG
AS I CAN
LIGHT
THE WAY.

NOT TOO SHABBY
FOR THE TEAM
LIGHTGALE,
eh, GUYS?



NEITHER
YOUR
POWER,
ALISON...

...NOR
WHAT IT
REVEALS.

A LIFETIME
WOULDN'T BE
ENOUGH...

TO
EXPLORE THIS
LABYRINTH.



THAT IS WHY
WOLVERINE
HAS GONE
AHEAD.



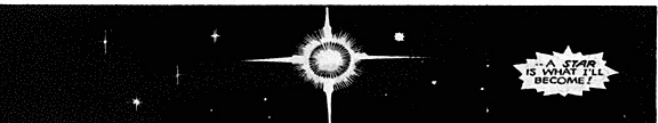
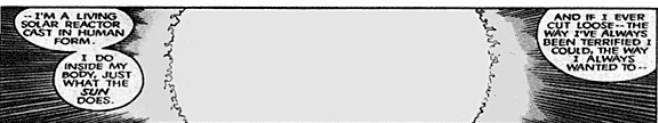
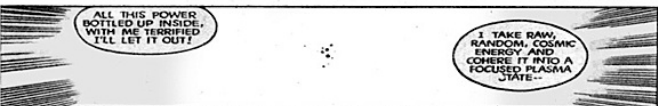
IS THIS MY DESIRE,
TO FADE AWAY?!

NO! NO!
THAT'S
WRONG!

ALL I WANT IS TO
HELP MY FRIENDS!

IF ONLY I
KNEW NOW!

YEAH, BUT S'POSE
HE GETS NAILED,
WHAT THEN?





A STATUE...

JUST LIKE ROGUE.

HE WAS FLARING SO BRIGHTLY, I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO BURN US.

HE FOUND HIS DESTINY, HE IS AT PEACE.

WILL THAT HAPPEN TO US?



THERE ARE WORSE FATES.

PSYLOCKE, ANY SIGN OF WOLVERINE?

I SENSE HIS THOUGHTS, CLEAR AS AIR.

HE'S FAR AHEAD, TRAVERSING A FANTASTIC MAZE-- THIS FAR, WITHOUT INCIDENT.



WE SHOULD ALL BE SO LUCKY-- ALTHOUGH I SADLY SUSPECT WE SHAN'T.

YOU KNOW, STORM, IF WE KEEP ON LIKE THIS, THERE'LL BE NONE OF US LEFT TO FIND THE CRYSTAL-- MUCH LESS FIGHT HORDE FOR IT.

I AM OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS, CAPTAIN.

THE IRONY IS, I CAN SENSE THE CRYSTAL.



IT GIVES OFF A PALPABLE PSYCHIC RESONANCE.

I THINK IT'S RIGHT BELOW US-- A THOUSAND LEVELS OR MORE, MILES BENEATH THE PLANETARY SURFACE.

UNLESS, SIS, IT'S ANOTHER TRAP.

ANOTHER ILLUSORY HEARTY DESIRE.



LONGSHOT!

HE'S DISAPPEARING!

STORM PSYLOCKE-- DO SOMETHING!

FOR THE LOVE OF MERCY-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE-- SOMEONE-- ANY OF YOU-- PLEASE--

--HELP HIM!

I'M-- FLYING AWAY!



-- DOESN'T WANT
ME TO BE APART
FROM IT, LIKE
YOU ALL ARE --

LONG-
SHOT, 2
BERRY

-WANTS ME
TO BE A PART
OF IT!

FIGURE 1

BUT WHY?!

PERHAPS HIS
INNOCENCE, MEGGAN.
HIS INNATE PURITY.
WE HAVE HEARTS'
DESIRES--

--CHOICES
TO MAKE
ABOUT OUR
LIVES AND
DESTINIES.

HE
MADE
ONE.

HE WAS
SCARED
TO COME
INSIDE.

I....
I HELD
OUT MY
HAND TO
HIM.

PERHAPS THE
CITADEL COULDN'T
STAND LONGSHOT
HAVING NONE?

BECAUSE
OF ME!

THIS IS
MY FAULT!

**ALISON-
DON'T!**

**I'LL
GET
HER!**

LEAVE HER,
CAPTAIN.

**STORM,
YOU CAN'T
ABANDON
HER!**

NEITHER
CAN I
RISK YOU-
OR ANY
OF US--

--BEING AMBUSHED BY THE CITADEL WHILE CHASING HER DOWN.

THE MISSION IS WHAT MATTERS, MY FRIENDS, MORE THAN OUR INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL.

**BETSY, STAY
PSILINKED
WITH HER.**

WHEN SHE'S CALMER,
LEAD HER BACK TO US.



DAZZLER!

ALISON!

GET OUT OF MY HEAD, MIND-WITCH!

LEAVE ME ALONE!

SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE SHE'S GOING. REALLY DOESN'T CARE.



THE GRANDEUR ABOUT HER ALIENS NO-THING, HER TEAMMATES EVEN LESS.

ALL SHE'S AWARE OF IS THE NEED TO RUN AND RUN AND RUN.



UNTIL SHE CAN'T ANYMORE.



SHE FEELS LIKE AN OLD WOMAN, SOUNDS WORSE.

TOO BROKEN TO MOVE.

GASPING DESPERATELY FOR BREATH, SOBBING HER GUTS OUT.



SHE HATES PAIN...

... YET NOW FEELS BRIMFUL, OVERFLOWING WITH IT.

FEEL BETTER?

ASHAMED, MOSTLY.

SOME X-MAN I AM, LETTING DOWN THE TEAM-- AS I DID LONGSHOT.

LONGSHOT MADE HIS OWN FREE CHOICE, ALISON, YOU MUSTN'T BLAME YOURSELF.

BUT HE MADE IT FOR ME!

WILL YOU STAY AWAY, THEN...

... OR REJOIN US?



OF COURSE, SILLY.

WE GIVE YOU FAR MORE CREDIT...

... THAN YOU EVER DO YOURSELF.

YOU'LL STILL HAVE ME?

I WISH I HAD YOUR STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE.

NEXT TO YOU AND STORM AND ROGUE...

... I'M SUCH A WASTE...

huh???



MY LIGHT-- IT'S GOING OUT!!

NO PROB,
NOT REALLY,
DON'T PANIC--

--EVEN IN PITH DARKNESS,
SO SCARY, BOOGY-MONSTERS
WAITING TO JUMP ME, PSYLOCKE
CAN LEAD ME, THE SOUND OF
THE OTHERS' VOICES RECHARGE
ME-- WHAT'S THAT?

OH!
THAT'S--
ME!

MR. WILSON FISK, YOU CLAIM TO BE
A HUMBLE IMPORTER OF SPICES

ARE YOU
NOT, IN FACT,
THE ABSOLUTE
MONARCH OF
THE NORTH
AMERICAN
UNDER-
WORLD--

--THE INFAMOUS
KINGPIN OF CRIME?!

AS UNITED
STATES
ATTORNEY
FOR THE
SOUTHERN
DISTRICT
OF NEW
YORK...

...I COULDN'T BE MORE PLEASSED WITH
THE KINGPIN'S CONVICTION AND LIFE
SENTENCE.

WE'VE BROKEN THE BACK OF
THE MOST VIOGUS AND
POWERFUL ROB IN THE
COUNTRY.

AS CHIEF
JUSTICE
OF THE
UNITED
STATES...

...THE FIRST
WOMAN TO HOLD
THAT HIGH OFFICE...

...IT IS MY GREAT
PRIVILEGE--AND
DISTINCT
PLEASURE--

...TO CALL THIS
SESSION OF THE
SUPREME COURT
TO ORDER.

THAT COULD HAVE BEEN
MY LIFE, MY FUTURE, IF
I'D DONE AS DAD
WANTED...

... FOLLOWED
IN HIS
FOOTSTEPS...
... GONE TO
LAW SCHOOL.

HE LOVED
THE LAW...

-- I THINK MORE,
SOMETIMES,
THAN ME--
--WHY
COULDN'T
I?





WE'VE
LOST
HER.

WE WERE IN RAPPORT,
I WAS TELEPATHICALLY
"YELLING" AT THE TOP OF
MY LUNGS, TRYING TO
HELP, OFFERING ALL
THE STRENGTH AND
SUPPORT I
COULD.



IT DIDN'T
MATTER.
ALISON
DIDN'T
HEAR.

SHE
SLIPPED
AWAY LIKE
MERCURY.

BLAST!



LADIES--
LOOK
OUT!



I THOUGHT
THESE
WALLS
COULDN'T
BREAK.

FASCINATING.
CRYSTALOGRAPHY
ISN'T MY FIELD, BUT
THE FUNDAMENTAL
STRUCTURE OF THE
WALL SEEMS
DIFFERENT. FAR
MORE BRITTLE,
CERTAINLY.

A PIECE OF
LUCK, IF THE
EFFECT IS
WIDESPREAD.

PERHAPS
LONGSHOT'S
DOING, SINCE
HIS ESSENCE
HAS MERGED
WITH THAT
OF THE
CITADEL.



BUT HOW COULD I
DO SUCH DAMAGE--

...WHERE DID
I GAIN SUCH
STRENGTH??

...THE
CRYSTAL
SHARDS
ARE
RAZOR-
SHARP--

...MY HAND
BADLY
SLASHED--



...WHY ISN'T THERE
ANY BLOOD--

--GASP!!

THE SKIN-- IT
ISN'T FLESH--
PEELING
AWAY-- AND
BENEATH--

--SOLID
METAL!



IF OUR
LUCK
HOLDS--

...I WAGER I'LL BE ABLE TO SMASH MY WAY
TO OUR DESTINATION, NO MATTER HOW FAR.

BUCK UP,
BETSY.

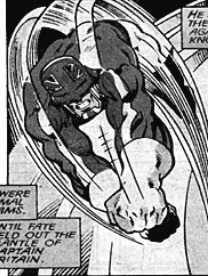
THE
TIDE'S
TURNED.

IT'S OUR
TURNING NOW.



YOU LOOK AFTER STORM AND BETSY, MEGGAN. I'LL LEAD THE WAY.

HE DIDN'T ASK TO BE A HERO.



HIS WERE NORMAL DREAMS.

UNTIL FATE HELD OUT THE MANTLE OF CAPTAIN BRITAIN.



HE STILL WONDERS, IF THE OFFER WERE MADE AGAIN-- WITH HIM KNOWING THE COST...

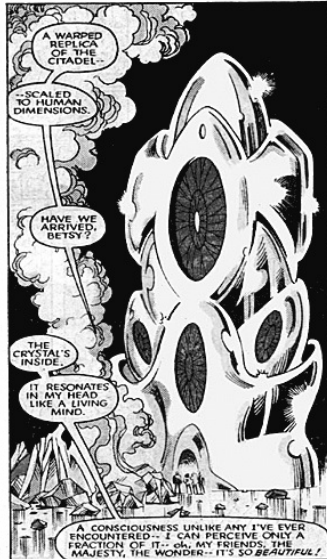
--THE NEVER-ENDING, ALL-CONSUMING SACRIFICE--



WOULD HE ACCEPT?



GLORY!



A WARPED REPLICA OF THE CITADEL--

--SCALED TO HUMAN DIMENSIONS.

HAVE WE ARRIVED, BETSY?

THE CRYSTAL'S INSIDE.

IT RESONATES IN MY HEAD LIKE A LIVING MIND.

A CONSCIOUSNESS UNLIKE ANY I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED-- I CAN PERCEIVE ONLY A FRACTION OF IT-- oh, MY FRIENDS, THE MAJESTY, THE WONDER-- IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL!

WE HAVE NO TIME TO SIGHTSEE.

PSYLOCKE, ALERT WOLVERINE TO OUR LOCATION. ACT AS A BEACON TO GUIDE HIM TO US, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

IN ADDITION, SCAN FOR HORDE.

HE'S ALREADY ON HIS WAY, COMING FAST, NOT BOTHERING HIM WITH HIS THOUGHTS, ALMOST DARING US TO FIGHT HIM.

BRIAN, WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT, WE HAVE TO PREPARE--?!

SOMETHING-- WITHIN THIS MOUND OF RUBBLE--

--I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT!

YOUR HOME, BRADDOCK MANOR!

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN HIS MOST SECRET DREAM--

--PROFESSOR BRIAN BRADDOCK, HIS WIFE, MEGGAN, HIS SISTER, BETSY--

AND-- THAT'S US!

--THE HAPPIEST OF FAMILIES, THE MOST PROSaic OF LIVES.

IS THAT OUR CHILD?

HE'S SO LOVELY-- AND, LOOK, I'M GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER, THAT'S SO MARVELOUS, I HOPE IT'S A GIRL!

MEGGAN, THIS ISN'T REAL.

IT'S A CITADEL TRAP.

BUT WE CAN MAKE IT REAL.

BRIAN, MY DARLING, THIS IS WHAT WE WERE MEANT TO BE. WHY DO YOU DENY IT?!

I'M CAPTAIN BRITAIN. I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES.

WHAT RIGHT HAVE I TO LIVE FOR MYSELF?

AND YET, HAVEN'T I DONE ENOUGH?

HAVEN'T I EARNED THE RIGHT?

BETSY, THERE'S A PLACE HERE FOR YOU.

YOU HAVE
YOUR DREAM,
BRIAN.

I HAVE
MINE.

I CANNOT
RUN AWAY.

LIKE
YOU...

I HAVE
FOUND MY
TRUE SELF, MY
DESTINY.

I MUST FIGHT,
TO PROTECT
THOSE I
CARE FOR.

NO!

YOU'RE NOT
MY SISTER!

YOU'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN!

AM I SO
FEARFUL?

I SUPPOSE
THE WARRIOR
ALWAYS IS.

BE HAPPY WITH YOUR
HEART'S DESIRE, BRIAN...

...AS I SHALL WITH MINE.

I AM SORRY.

I, TOO, IN A WAY,
FOR INNOCENCE
LOST. I THOUGHT
MY PAST HAD
MADE ME HARD.

AS DEADLY IN
MY OWN WAY AS
WOLVERINE.

BUT THIS
IS HOW I WAS
BORN.

MY LIFE MERELY
SERVED TO TEMPER
AND HONE THE
STEEL THAT
ALREADY EXISTED.

IF FOR NOTHING ELSE -- FOR WHAT HE'S
FORCED US TO CONFRONT WITHIN
OURSELVES TODAY --

-- HORDE
DESERVES
TO DIE.

HURRY ON
AHEAD, STORM,
HE'S NEARLY
HERE.

I'LL TRY TO
BUY YOU WHAT
GRACE I CAN.

MAIDEN
BLESS,
PSYLOCKE.

FAREWELL.

ELSEWHERE...

OTHERS'RE DOIN' THEIR SHARE--

--WHILE I'M TURNIN' OUT TO BE AS MUCH USE HERE AS I WAS AT THE MANSION AGAINST HORDE.

SOME WARRIOR. SOME FLAMIN' WOLVERINE.

PLACE IS CUTTIN' US DOWN TO SIZE.

WONDER WHEN IT'LL BE MY...

--LORD? JAPAN.

CAN'T BE. LIE. FANTASY. ILLUSION.

YET EVERY SENSE TELLS ME THIS IS REAL!

I CAN SMELL THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS--AN' THAT'S THE AMIDA BUDDHA, OUT BACK OF THE YASHIDA ANCESTRAL CASTLE.

AN' WAITIN' THERE FOR ME--

<-MARIKO,-->

THOSE EYES, TO DIE FOR.

YOU'RE EVERYTHING I'M NOT--SOFT WHERE I'M HARD, GENTLE WHERE I'M ROUGH. A WOMAN OF BREEDING, AN' CULTURE.

I'M A BACKWOODS BRAWLER, DARLIN', WHAT THE BLAZES DO YOU SEE IN ME?

< DOES THE OUTWARD, FLESHLY CASEMENT MATTER, MY LOVE... >

< WHEN THE HEART IS NOBLE? >

*TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE. --Amn.

THIS NEVER HAPPENED.

YOU CALLED OUR WEDDING OFF.

<ANOTHER TIME.>

<A SECOND CHANCE>

< WILL YOU CAST IT TO THE WINDS? >

I SHOULD.

MY FRIENDS--THE X-MEN--THEY NEED--I NEED--

< I CANNOT. >

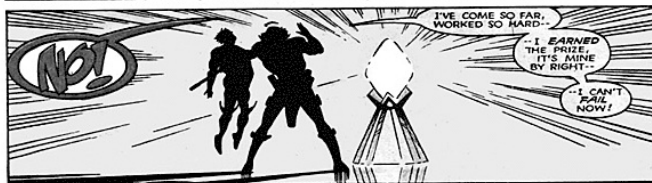
< THAT'S THE SPIRIT, LOVER! >

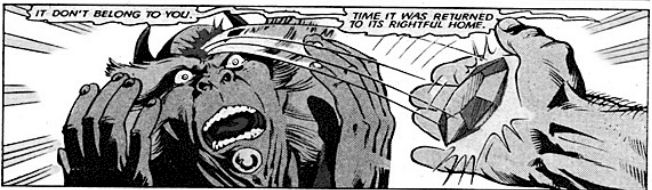
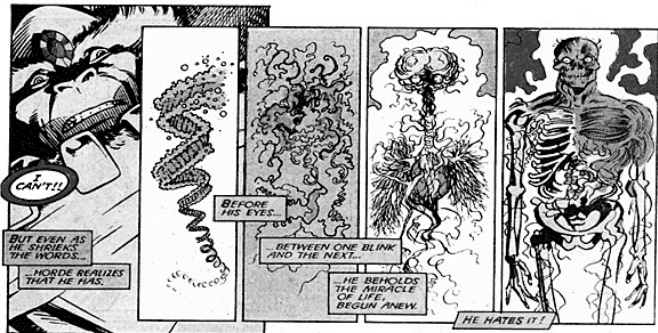












HORDE'S LIVED
A LONG TIME...



...AN
ETERNITY'S
WORTH OF
RAPACIOUS
CRUELTY
AND
SELF-
INDULGENCE.



WITHOUT THE CRYSTAL SHARD
TO SUSTAIN HIM, HOWEVER...

...ALL HIS VICES,
ALL HIS CRIMES,
CATCH UP WITH HIM.

WOLVERINE
DOESN'T NOTICE
HORDE'S FINAL
MOMENTS.



HE HAS OTHER
THINGS ON HIS MIND.

WAS THIS HOW
JEAN GREY FELT...

...WHEN SHE
BECAME
PHOENIX?



I CAN
SENSE...

-- EVERY-
THING!

EVERY PARTICLE OF
MATTER, EVERY
BURST OF ENERGY,
EVERY LIVING THING--
IN ALL CREATION!

THE
UNIVERSE--

...MINE--

...TO DO
WITH AS
I WISH.



I CAN
TOUCH EVERY
SOUL WITH AN
AWARENESS
OF HONOR,
DECENCY, COURAGE...

I CAN
TRANSFORM...

...SHAPE...

...CREATE...

...HEAL...

...DESTROY...

...STOP.

BEFORE
I START.

I'M TALKIN'
LIKE GOD.



ONLY
I AIN'T
GOD.

THAT WAS
HORDE'S
TRIP.





EVENTUALLY, THE OTHERS RETURN TO THEIR BEDS. ONLY STORM REMAINS AWAKE, HER ROVING STEPS LEADING HER FINALLY TO THE CUPOLA, AT THE TOP OF THE HOUSE...



WHERE SHE STARES WACKERINGLY AT THE STARS.

ALREADY, THE NIGHT'S EVENTS HAVE BEGUN TO FADE FROM HER MEMORY.



SOON, SHE SENSES, IT WILL BE FORGOTTEN, LIKE ANY DREAM.

PERHAPS THAT IS FOR THE BEST.



SOMEHOW, WOLVERINE FOUND A WAY TO DEFEAT HORDE AND BRING THE X-MEN SAFELY HOME.

SHE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW THE PRICE OF THAT VICTORY...

...SAVE THAT IT WAS AS TERRIBLE IN ITS OWN WAY AS THE COST OF DEFEAT.

AND THAT TOO, SHE THINKS, IS FOR THE BEST.

ACROSS THE INFINITE, STATUES STAND TALL AND SILENT BEFORE THEIR SHATTERED CITADEL.

ONLY-- THESE AREN'T STATUES.



EACH CAME IN TURN SEEKING THE CRYSTAL, UNAWARE IT WAS IN REALITY A TEST, AS OLD AND ENDURING AS TIME.

TO ATTAIN THIS ULTIMATE PRIZE...

...YET DENY THE TEMPTATION OF ITS POWER...



...IS THE MARK OF A TRULY MATURE SPECIES. THE QUESTER IS RETURNED HOME, HIS RACE ALLOWED TO EVOLVE TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL.

BUT THOSE WHO TRY TO USE THE CRYSTAL...

FIND THEMSELVES TRANSFORMED INTO THESE ETERNAL GUARDIANS.



WORSE THEIR RACES ARE GENETICALLY FROZEN IN PLACE, NEVER TO EVOLVE ANOTHER STEP. FOREVER LEFT BEHIND, WHILE THE REST OF CREATION PASSES THEM BY.

HUMANITY WILL NEVER KNOW THE DEBT IT OWES.

FOR TONIGHT, THE RACE FACED ITS ULTIMATE TEST.



AND THANKS TO ITS WAYWARD, OUTCAST CHILDREN-- THE X-MEN-- PASSED.

FIN